Marion Harland—1830-1922

To have produced a sound cook book is often a more solid guaranty of enduring fame than to have written a half dozen "best seller" novels. Some one has cleverly remarked that for the average popular success nowadays "posterity" is but six months in the future. But a good cook book not only has its immediate vogue for a generation or two, perhaps, but remains a by no means negligible item in the cultural history of its day. Even so noteworthy a man of letters as Sir Kenelm Digby is remembered quite as much for his contributions to the noble art of fine eating and drinking as for his other essays in politics, philosophy and humane letters. The name of "Marion Harland," the maker of the "National Cook Book," was more familiar in many thousand homes of the grandmothers and mothers of the present generation than that of most statesmen of international importance. The cook book used to rank next to the Family Bible in most home libraries—and it does to-day in those parts of the country where the old home life has not been swept away by the two room and bath apartment, the delicatessen and the restaurant.

But "Marion Harland" was only a pseudonym, and many thousand devoted readers have been also familiar for much more than half a century with her real name—Mary Virginia Terhune, prolific writer of pleasant fiction, of reminiscence, of historical essays, literary criticism and contributions to questions of the day. Besides all that, she was an efficient editor on *St. Nicholas*, the Chicago *Tribune* and the old *Wide Awake*, a magazine which those of us who are old enough to remember it as a brightener of our youth will always feel was the best children's magazine ever printed. Finally she was the mother of two daughters and a son, each of whom has attained distinction in American letters—Mrs. Christine Terhune Herrick, Mrs. Virginia Terhune Vandewater and Albert Payson Terhune. Few, indeed, among American women could point to so extensive and varied a contribution to the literature and thought of the day as Mrs. Terhune.

She had the further unusual distinction that, although she was born more than twenty years before the civil war and was thoroughly of the South, she had also the trick of perennial youth and knew how to grow up with the times. Her last novel, published but a few years ago, had a genuinely youthful quality.

She was born in Amelia county, Virginia, the daughter of a typical family of ante-bellum gentry; she was educated at home by tutors and governesses, with a small supplement of schooling, as was the fashion of the time and place, and she took to writing at the age of 14. Such solid talent is apt to be precocious. In 1856 she was married to the Rev. Edward Payson Terhune, who died in 1907. Besides her purely literary interests she was deeply concerned with history, especially of her native Virginia. She had been an officer of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, of the Pocahontas Memorial Association and of the Virginia Historical Society and was active in their affairs. Several of her books, such as "When Grandmamma Was New," "When Grandmamma Was Fourteen," "Some Colonial Homesteads," and much of her autobiography (published in 1911) are of no small importance as history and trustworthy reminiscence of a bygone day.

In making her "National Cook Book" and "The Helping Hand" she collaborated with her daughter, Mrs. Herrick, and the volume on "Everyday Etiquette" was partly the work of her other daughter, Mrs. Vandewater. And in collaboration with her son, Albert Payson Terhune, she wrote a novel, "Dr. Dale: A Story Without a Moral," published in 1900, and said to be the first instance on record of literary partnership between mother and son. There is something very pleasant and inspiring about such collaboration of a mother with her children.

Besides the famous "National Cook Book" she had to her credit a number of practically useful books—all of them, by the way, written in good style, which is more than can be said of the type as a whole—dealing with the kitchen, household matters and the delicate business of social etiquette. Finally she conducted for many years a syndicate department, "School for Housewives," which appeared in twenty-five papers.

In pure literature, aside from household economics and history, her list of titles fills nearly half a column of "Who's Who." Although none of them ever attained the momentary rank of a "best seller," they had, and still have, a solid success among a large body of readers and can be found on the shelves of all public libraries. For many years Mrs. Terhune made her home on the upper West Side of New York city.

Marion Harland

Problems of Old Age

SENESCENCE. By G. Stanley Hall. D. Appleton & Co.
FACING OLD AGE. By Abraham Epstein. Alfred A. Knopf.

PERHAPS one of the least understood periods of life is old age. The child is instinctively repelled by the sight of age, the youth tolerates it because he has to, the mature man, if not yet senescent, dismisses it from his thoughts as a necessary evil mitigated only by its remoteness. Among savage tribes the aged are sometimes venerated as seers or wizards, and sometimes slain as having outlived their usefulness; and while, among civilized peoples, they are ordinarily accorded some measure of respect, yet there are those who agree with Osler's famous contention that the real work of the world is done by men between 25 and 40 years of age, and that persons over 60, in common with superannuated dogs, horses and cats, should be painlessly put to death.

A diametrically opposite view of the matter is taken by G. Stanley Hall, whose treatise on "Senescence" is a companion volume to his study of "Adolescence," issued some years ago. It is Dr. Hall's contention that old age should be an active, vivid, beautiful phase of life, instead of the physical and intellectual shipwreck that it is so often painted to be; he maintains that the lengthening of the shadows should only serve to bring out the outlines of life in more mellow tones, and to make one see in clearer perspective and to appreciate more fully the meaning of the long road that one must follow from childhood. Old age should not be a time of querulousness and cynicism and regret; it should be a period of peacefulness and contentment and repose, pervaded by a rare beauty all its own. For though it lacks the fragrance and the freshness of the springtime, yet it has the color and majesty of the fall, the splendor of autumnal hillsides and of great woods from which the last crimson leaves are slowly fluttering.

To the presentation of this view Dr. Hall devotes a voluminous work, rich in illustration, fascinating in method, comprehensive in scope. It would be difficult to find another book that deals with the subject so exhaustively and yet so interestingly; from beginning to end it is infused with life, and the style is such as to hold the attention of the youthful as well as of the gray-haired. There are instructive and entertaining chapters on the history of old age, on literature of the aged, on the statistics of old age, on medical views and treatment, and on biology and physiology; but perhaps the most interesting chapters are those in which the author summarizes his conclusions and comments on the psychology of death.

The aged, declares Dr. Hall, have a necessary place in the world's activities. It is for them "to complete the drama, to finish the window of Aladdin's tower, to add a new story to the life of man, for as yet we do not know what full maturity really is and the last culminating chapter of humanity's history is yet to be written." In other words, men live not too long but too short a time; there is not too much of old age but too little of it; even the senile, as Shaw believes, are cut off too early in life for real accomplishment; and, as a result, the world is too poorly supplied with "the sapience that long life alone can give." As testimony to the truth of these statements, one may mention cases such as that of the novelist De Morgan, who published his first book at the age of 67; or of the naturalist Fabre, who lived to be 92, and wrote most of his great works during the last twenty years of his life.

In this connection, the author is guilty of an apparent inconsistency, for he declares, though with obvious reason, that "the Great Silencer's work of oblivion is benign for the race," since the very old are inclined to be arch-conservatives and to clog the progress of mankind. Grandparents, he reminds us, are apt to oppose advances; great-grandparents, were they common, would be a grave hindrance to all liberal movements; and great-great-grandparents would tend to cause the stagnation of civilization. For this reason, the lengthening of the average human life would not be an advantage unless accompanied by a corresponding increase in the distance between generations.

Old age must naturally look forward to the time when the gathering shades have left no trace of the light. Dr. Hall treats at length the subject of death, but, while he regards it calmly and without fear, he is not one of those who look for the survival of the soul. Rather, he holds that soul as well as body will return again to the elements, to the earth and the air and the sunlight and the great darkness whence it came. He even seems to regard this prospect resignedly, hopefully, as though it were all he could desire; he believes that death is "restoration, resumption, emancipation, diffusion, reversion"; that there is nothing greater than to be one again with the universe, the universe of illimitable spaces and of gigantic sun swarms, of infinitesimal atoms and of the ubiquitous forces of light and gravity, of innumerable living things and of races constantly changing and destroyed amid a vast disorder that is only the veil of Eternal Law.

II.

The problems of old age are discussed from an entirely different point of view in Mr. Epstein's volume on "Facing Old Age." Here we have a treatment not of the psychology but of the physical needs of the aged; an indictment of a society that disregards its wornout members, and a presentation of prospective measures for remedying one of the most grievous of our social ulcers. "This book," says the author . . . "is an appeal for social action. It attempts to set forth the need for a constructive policy with regard to the aged." By way of introduction, we are reminded that until recently the wages in most trades were insufficient to allow a worker to provide for his old age; that, accordingly, when he had expended all the energy that was in him, he was in danger of becoming a dependent and of being scorned and maltreated because he had given all that he had to give. While it is true that some remedial measures have been taken, this unfortunate and unjust system is still far from obsolete, reminding us that we are not wholly without points of similarity to those wild tribes that abandon their aged members to the wilderness or ceremoniously bury them alive.

Mr. Epstein's volume should suffice to arouse those who have been unconscious of the gravity of the problem; and the wealth of statistics which it provides, the thoroughness of its methods of investigation, and the careful examination which it makes of proposed remedies, should serve to recommend it to the student of social reform.

STANTON A. COBLENTZ.

Passing Shadows

AT THE MOMENT OF DEATH. By Camille Flammarion. The Century Company.

IN this, the second volume of his minute study of the phenomena of "Death and Its Mystery," M. Flammarion is more occupied with the accumulation and sifting of data than in drawing any too definite conclusions from them. The book, therefore, is of no small importance to scientific investigators, since M. Flammarion is primarily after facts, and he adheres pretty closely to exact scientific methods in gathering and presenting them. He is much closer to such investigators as Crawford and James in this work than to enthusiasts like Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Conan Doyle. He does not make the very curious slip of following scientific methods carefully up to a certain point only to jump clear over an abyss of non sequiturs into a fairy land of pure guesswork. There remains, nevertheless, a large possibility of a serious percentage of error in his research, since he is inevitably obliged to take most of his material at second hand and must trust somewhat to the accuracy of statement of his informants. To this he has a ready answer, saying:

> It was on the comparison of observations that astronomy was founded. It will be the same with psychic science, and this is the only method by which to attain to knowledge of truth.

There is weight in that contention, provided the mass of "observations" is sufficiently great, and provided extreme care is taken in admitting each individual report. As to that M. Flammarion is always entitled to respectful consideration, however close he may sometimes go to imaginative science, for he rarely slips over the edge of danger.

This volume is filled with an extraordinarily interesting series of "occult" manifestations at the moment of death, of apparitions of the dying, of telepathic manifestations, "doubles," warnings announcing death, deaths "announced by noises" and hundreds of minor puzzles. In some cases he hesitates at the suspicion that occasionally the "communications" were actually received from a person already quite dead, instead of merely at the passing moment, but for the most part that is reserved for the forthcoming third volume of the study. The whole thing makes very fascinating, creepy reading for the interested layman, as well as material of value for the student of psychic problems. It is hardly necessary to say that M. Flammarion writes as a master of expression; the translation, by Latrobe Carroll, is also very good. The specific conclusion which M. Flammarion does venture to state is:

> All these observations prove that a human being does not consist only of a body that is visible, tangible, ponderable. . . . . We know, henceforth, that spiritual Man exists, that he is relatively independent of material Man. Material Man dies; spiritual Man does not.

The skeptical scientist may, perhaps, quarrel with some of the links in his chain, pointing out that the "imponderable" may yet be weighed and shown to be merely more subtle in its essence than the familiarly ponderable, but M. Flammarion's argument is not to be lightly set aside as a vagary, as his hypotheses are not based on imagination but upon observation.